

The dream of homeownership for residents in the [Colonias](#) of South Texas will become a reality through the Community Resource Group's [Rural Housing and Economic Development \(RHED\)](#) Grant. Through this same grant many other families will have much needed rehabilitation work to their homes through this same RHED grant.

Community Resource Group, Inc. received funding from HUD to improve housing conditions for Colonias residents in Starr County by rehabilitating homes which could be rehabilitated, demolishing those which could not be rehabilitated and constructing new homes on the same sites. There are approximately 2,000 lots in the 14 colonias served by this grant, of which 1,000 are developed and occupied by 6,000 people. The RHED grant will rehabilitate approximately 16 homes and construct 37 homes. A separate Ford Foundation grant of one million dollars paid the cost of clearing the titles to the properties, thereby enabling the transfer of clear, marketable titles to the persons who owned the individual properties under contract.

Another important facet of this grant is that funds can be used to provide technical training, technical assistance and direct project implementation assistance to the on-site staff so they will be able to assume this responsibility on any future colonia projects. The eventual objective is to enable the on-site Starr County office located in the Los Lomas Colonia to serve as a one-stop-assistance-center.

The fourteen colonias targeted by Community Resource Groups constitute a small part of the Starr County Colonias, and the homes to be rehabilitated or built through this program constitute a very small portion of the need of the 6,000 people who live in these 14 colonias. Community Resource Group hopes to use the results of this program as the base for an ongoing infrastructure and housing improvement program.

The Office of Community Planning and Development in the local San Antonio Office has been working with Community Resource Group, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development staff in Rio Grande City, Texas, and outstationed staff from the Office of Departmental Operations and Coordination (ODOC) to expand homeownership to underserved areas that remain job-poor and economically isolated.



The Meza family is standing in the area that was once their kitchen, living room and bedroom. The rehabilitation to their home consists of an addition that will double its size and include indoor plumbing, electricity, and installation of a septic system. They reside in the West Alto Bonito Colonia of Starr County, Texas.





The 7-member Meza family live in a 350 square foot dwelling. It will soon double in size once the rehabilitation is completed.



Marinella Murillo, CPD Representative from the San Antonio HUD office, future homeowner Victor Segura and his son Little Victor, Community Resource Group on-site director Amada Villarreal and her assistant, Erico Garza, stand atop the compacted area which will soon be the site of the Segura family's new home in the Miquel Colonia in Starr County, Texas. HUD Rural Housing and Economic Development funds will be used to help pay for the construction of this home.





An inside view of the current living quarters of the 7-member Segura family.



The exposed electrical wiring is one of many hazards in the Segura family's present home in the Miguel Colonia.



Exposed ceilings, walls, and flooring are other common hazards in the Segura family's current dwelling.





The unpaved roads of the Alto Bonito Colonia in Starr County did not deter Vivian and Miguel Saenz from showing Marinella Murillo, CPD Representative, some of the games they like to play.





Interior rehabilitation is underway in the David Cerda home in the Miguel Colonia.



The installation of a switchbox and electrical outlets in each room is part of the interior rehabilitation.



Installation of electrical outlets, hookup to the Starr County water system, and kitchen cabinet replacement were only a few of the needed improvements to the Cerda family's kitchen.





The completed kitchen rehabilitation under Community Resource Group's Rural Housing and Economic Development Grant.